



Pest Cast

The Row Crops IPM Newsletter for the LRGV, a cooperative project of Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Cotton & Grain Producers of the lower Rio Grande Valley

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General Situation

Temperatures were cooler this week with cloudy overcast conditions. Very little rainfall was received last weekend for the Valley as we received trace amounts during the week in some areas.

Cotton

Throughout the Valley cotton remains looking pretty clean for now. I did encounter some fields with a few leaves having red spidermites present just to note. However, the only pest we have been encountering in cotton this week everywhere is cotton aphids as their populations increased this week a bit. Aphid populations across the Valley have been relatively low to none in 2-4 true leaf cotton, with cotton fields that are squaring having some moderate cotton aphid populations. Action threshold for treating aphids in cotton is 40-70 per leaf. It is recommended that you sample about 60 leaves per field to get an average of aphids per leaf to make your assessment. You also want to make note of any predators you encounter in the fields feeding on cotton aphids. I encountered many ladybug larvae that had just hatched and several adults feeding on cotton aphids this week. Predators such as ladybugs, syrphids, scymnus have been found this week feeding on cotton aphids. From what I saw this week it seems that next week will be the week to make decisions about treating for cotton aphids or not. We have a lot of younger cotton (2-4 true leaf stage) and if terminals and stems of these young cotton plants are infested heavily with cotton aphids it can affect the overall plant growth and yield. Aphids reproduce parthenogenically meaning that they produce live young, these young aphids go through several instars and become adults in about 7 days, thus they will reproduce too. Each adult female aphid will lay about 85 live young aphids; thus, aphid populations can increase exponentially in a matter of days due to their lifecycle and the temperature so will be important to monitor diligently the next couple weeks. Still not seeing any fleahoppers in squaring cotton and there is a lot of cotton throughout the Valley squaring at this time.



Figure 1: Ladybug larva feeding on cotton aphids.

Grain Sorghum

Sorghum stages varied from fields just heading out to some starting to boot and others still in the

early tillering stages. The only county that I have documented seeing sugarcane aphids in commercial sorghum is Hidalgo County thus far for the 2021 growing season. I've encountered corn leaf aphids in whorls of sorghum and fall armyworm present this week but very little here and there. Sorghum looks very clean overall right now throughout the Valley.

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